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Orientation and Student Life

THE MUSLIM VOICE

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Reflections on Life and Death

By Mustafa Kamal Syed

The sun shines brightly outside as I write this. I can hear that roar of cars on the highway. Children are playing in the park nearby. I've finished eating lunch and have to get back to work soon. Another lazy day passes, like so many other days of the summer. However, things look different to me now. About two weeks ago, one of our brothers at the University of Toronto passed away.

His name was Abdul Majeed Rizvi. Friends of his called him Sameer. He was a senior student in the Faculty of Engineering; another year left to graduate, and then the rest of his life was before him. Graduate school, or perhaps a job with a good engineering firm. Maybe a position in the Middle East, where his family had lived for many years. Soon, he would experience the joys (and trials) of marriage and fathering children, had Allah willed it. But now, for him, none of this will come to pass.

Brother Abdul Majeed passed away on his way to California, near Colorado. The car that he was sitting in flipped over three times and he and a cousin were thrown out of the rear window, landing thirty feet away from the car. Though the medical teams arrived within ten minutes to airlift the injured to the closest hospital, it was too late. He slipped into a coma and died before waking. His cousin and aunt, also in the back seat of the car, were severely injured. The driver and passengers in the front seat were treated and released.

If there is one thing that is far from many of our minds at the moment, it is death. We map out the plans for our lives with the belief, however rational or irrational it is, that we will live for many years to come. We know when we will graduate, get a job, get married; some of us have even planned where we will live, and how many children of each sex and age we will have. We put off things for the next week, or the next month, or even next year, because we know that eventually, we will get around to them, won't we? After all, we have our whole lives.

Yet when we reflect on the precarious grip that we each has on our own lives, on the fragility of the human body and the *blessing* of survival from day to day, don't we feel that perhaps we may one day pass? Perhaps we expect it, but not for many years. We're young; we're not *supposed* to die.

I've never really experienced the death of someone close to me. When I went to the Janaza Salat of Abdul Majeed, it was only the second funeral I had been to, and the first one in which I knew the person who had died. When the simple pine box, draped in a green cloth with Arabic writing on it was wheeled into the prayer hall at the Islamic Foundation in Scarborough before Salat-ul-Jum'ah, the *reality* of his death really struck me.

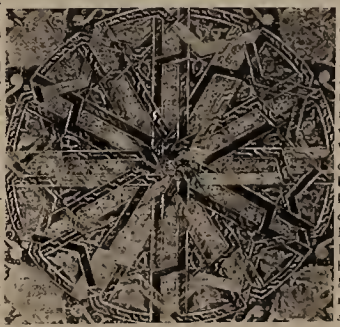
I didn't know the brother very well. I saw him for Salat when I would pray at the International Students' Center, where most of the engineers pray. I would meet with a group of brothers and exchange salaams. It was not until my family went to his house, when it turned out that our mothers were childhood friends, that I really spoke to him. Just two weeks before his death, his family had come to my house for dinner, but he hadn't been able to make it; he had to look after the family business. Yet I remember one thing about him, and that was his brilliant smile and gentle nature. Whenever I saw him, he had on a genuine, infectious smile.

When the Mu'adhin started to call the *Adhan*, I began to think about my own life, and how in many ways we were similar. Both young, both students in technical faculties with bright futures. Yet I was sitting here, preparing for Salat ul-Jum'ah, and he was not. As the haunting strains on the *Adhan* filled the prayer hall, I felt a sudden rush of emotion and I began to weep. Whether I wept for myself, or for him, I don't know. He would never again be able to hear the call to prayer and perform it. *Oh Allah! Let me live to perform my next prayer to you.* His book was closed. *My book will be closed.* What he had sent before him of good, may Allah reward him for it, and as for his shortcomings, may Allah forgive him and grant him His Mercy and forgiveness. *Oh Allah! Forgive me!*

What am I, before Allah? One day, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps next year, or in fifty years, my day will come. Will I *expect* death? Probably not. I know that one day I will die, but I deny it to myself, as many others do. I slack off in my performance of my duties towards Allah when it is expedient to do so. I rush my Salat. I sleep in for Fajr on occasion. *'Udhkur Allah kathiyran — Remember Allah much.* I don't remember Allah enough. As I wept, I could feel only a glimpse of the pain experienced by his parents and his brother and sisters. How would my parents feel?

On Saturday, we heard of a sister, Zubeda Hai, who was struck by a runaway truck and killed. She was merely walking along on the sidewalk with some children that she was baby-sitting, when the truck climbed the curb and struck them, dragging them for six meters before stopping. She was killed, along with one of the children. She was buried on Saturday. I didn't know her, but I was told that she was active in her community, and a pious woman.

Two days ago, we got a phone call from California from one of my great-uncles, my maternal grandmother's brother. One of her (and his) brothers had passed away on Saturday. They buried him after Isha the same day. My grandmother was devastated. She was the oldest, and the only sister. Of her four younger brothers, two had passed away recently; passed away before her. The



oldest had died last year during Ramadhan. This brother, who had been ill with a cancer, but thought to be recovering, had just written us a letter which arrived on Thursday. He wrote that he had gained weight since his treatment began, and seemed to be regaining his health, though the treatment had made him lose his hair. But he was very weak. He wrote, "I don't want to be ungrateful, but I fear that Allah will not save me. Allah does not like one to kill himself, but I do not think that I will survive this sickness. Forgive me, *appa* (elder sister), that I cannot see you again before I die."

As Muslims, we have the certainty of death, and of life after death; of Judgment and Punishment or Reward; of the Gardens of Heaven, and the Fires of Hell. We are told time and time again by Allah to be aware of death, to be sure of death, and to prepare to die. Death is not something that comes by chance or accident. It is not unusual. It is a thing ordained. Before we are born, the time of our death is set. We cannot escape it. But why do we not prepare for it? We do we feel such sorrow?

When we reflect on the transitory nature of life, and how little value there is in the things of this world, our entire framework of existence changes. Does it seem so important now that we have a bigger house, or a faster car, or better jewelry than our neighbor? Does it matter that we are the President of MSA or the local mosque, or that we're a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer? Does it matter that we are the children of so-and-so, the leaders of such-and-such, or that people are jealous of our position in life?

Allah says in the Qur'an, in Surat 69, *"The Reality. What is the Reality? How will you understand what the Reality is?"* (69:1-3). The inference is that we will never understand. We know the reality of life, and of death, but often the knowledge has not yet entered our hearts. May Allah grant us His Forgiveness, and honor us with His Mercy. May He lift the veils from our eyes and our hearts, and may He grant us guidance. May He strengthen us and help us to struggle for the religion of Truth. May He allow us to come closer to Him until he loves us, and He is the eyes with which we see, the ears with which we hear, the feet with which we walk, and the hand with which we strike. May He give us victory over the unbelievers, and may He give us victory over ourselves. Surely, to Allah do we belong, and it is to Him that we shall surely return. *Ameen.*

Mustafa Kamal Syed is a graduating student in Islamic Studies and Computer Science

Letter from the President

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Assalamu Alaikum, May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

On behalf of the Muslim Students' Association, I would like to welcome you to the University of Toronto. Inshallah, I hope that I will have an opportunity to meet many of you over the school year, and I pray that Allah provides us with many opportunities to serve the cause of Islam together.

Last year was a period of momentous change for the MSA. Through the dedicated work of many brothers and sisters, the level of activity and presence on campus reached new levels. The regular program schedule, Da'wah table and other activities brought hundreds of Muslims together to discuss and learn about one another and the *deen* of Allah.

This year we are in the process of putting together a year-long agenda with a somewhat different focus. The theme for the MSA this year is "Community Building"and we will be trying grow on the experiences of previous years and bring Muslims together first and foremost for the worship of Allah, and secondly to begin working towards establishing a viable community presence on campus.

Islam is dynamic. Its message is not only life-giving, but life-enhancing — it transforms people into fully productive, active human beings. This process of creating active, creative individuals is not instantaneous, rather it takes effort and much work. The potential to create a community on campus is great. With over 3,000 Muslims at the University of Toronto, the goal ahead of us is also vast, but step-by-step, we will, Allah willing, achieve it.

However, the MSA and your fellow brothers and sisters need you, for without individuals there really is no community. Furthermore, the MSA is here for you; we represent the Muslim community on campus to the school administration and sort out other problems to the best of our ability. The MSA executive serves as a resource on campus issues and affairs, and we can even get you in touch with someone in your field if you need help with courses or homework. MSA is as much a service organization as it is an activist organization — with the help of Allah we will continue to become better in both capacities.

Finally, some advice for first year students. As I am sure everyone has told you the university experience is daunting and exciting at the same time — just don't let it become too exciting! As Muslims there is the added challenge of keeping one's Islamic integrity and identity intact while getting to know the campus and all the opportunities it has to offer. Unfortunately, sex and drinking, have become mainstays of the freshman orientation programs held around campus during the first few weeks. The choice is up to you to participate in these activities or not, since the constraints of home and family are no longer present to even deter. Yet always keep in mind that Allah is watching and that our lives has much more meaning when we sacrifice our lower desires to pursue goodness and condemn iniquity.

May Allah make this year productive and successful for us all and may he inspire within us the determination and character of the Prophet Mohammed, his companions and all those who follow in his way. May Allah grant us peace in this life and the hereafter and raise us in the company of the righteous. Ameen,

Your Brother,

Abdul-Rehman Malik
Ameer, MSA University of Toronto
St. George Campus

WHAT IS THE MUSLIM VOICE?

The Muslim Voice is published every two weeks by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto.

The Muslim Voice seeks to present Muslim perspectives on issues of concern to students. The majority of the articles are written by and for university students.

During the 1993-94 university year, we had 14 issues of the newsletter. Our circulation started at 250 and rose to approximately 700 copies by the end of the year. Our circulation in the summer rose to about 2000 copies, with this issue printing 3000 copies.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute by writing articles, giving their reactions to articles written, or giving us constructive criticism on how to improve our publication.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Kamal Syed, at 905-890-8620, email: a378syed@cdf.utoronto.ca, or email Faraz Rabbani at: frabbani@epas.utoronto.ca.

You can mail articles to:

The Muslim Voice

Editorial Policy

Aim

The Muslim Voice will seek to:

- Be an informational forum for Muslim students.
- Deal with issues concerning Muslims in North American society.
- Be a forum for constructive intellectual discussion and interaction among Muslim students.
- Help raise people's knowledge of Islam in all its aspects.
- Inform people of upcoming events both on and off campus.
- Act as a vehicle for furthering cooperation between the region's MSAs.

Editorial Policy & Guidelines

The Muslim Voice will seek to adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah at all times.

- In line with its Aims, *The Muslim Voice* will generally publish articles by Muslims and from a Islamic perspective.
- *The Muslim Voice* will generally publish articles about any issue relevant to Muslims, within reasonable limits; that anything expressed within an article is not contrary to the Qur'an or Sunnah.
- Nothing expressed in *The Muslim Voice* should be construed as being the "official" position of the MSA, or the Editorial Staff; opinions expressed in articles or editorials will be only of the authors, and must be considered as such.
- Submission of an article does not guarantee its publication.

Top 10 Reasons *Not* To Apply To Medical School

10. Having to deal with Power-Hungry nurses.
9. 200 Nerds as classmates
8. Difficult to balance MSA work and Med School (see Iqbal's broken window)
7. White Lab coats are not in style.
6. Lack of sleep.
5. Get asked too many stupid medical questions by your friends.
4. All this work only to have Uncle Bob take 60%of it away.
3. When someone gets hurt, you have to help out.
2. By the time you graduate, it's time to retire.
1. Too many marriage proposals.

Top 10 Reasons To Apply to Medical School

10. Free lunches from Drug companies.
9. You always look cool in your Toronto Meds leather jacket.
8. Writing doctor's notes for your friends.
7. Power trips while wearing surgery greens.
6. All play, no work *(hee hee)*.
5. It's better than being an artsy.
4. Six figure salary.
3. Use of pager for personal pleasure/calls.
2. MCAT is a real character builder.
1. Too many marriage proposals.

by Iqbal Ahmed and Omar Islam

...stay tuned some serious talk about Muslims in Med School in the next issue of The Muslim Voice...

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The Muslim Voice is an independent newsletter produced by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto.
The Muslim Voice aims to provide Muslim views on issues and topics of interest to Muslims.
The Muslim Voice is published every two weeks and has a regular distribution of 600 copies. This issue has a distribution of 5000 copies.

May Allah guide us in all that we do.

Building Our Community:

Student Activism and the Future of the Ummah

by Abdul-Rehman Malik

While Islam stresses the individual nature of faith, it contains an intensely community orientated message. The individual is responsible for their own actions and will be accountable to Allah for what they have done, however among the most basic Muslim responsibility is to fulfill our duties and obligations to one another. As students, we have a unique opportunity to utilize our position within the community-at-large and within the Muslim ummah itself. While actively pursuing higher education, we constitute a highly skilled and creative body whose God-given talents are tremendous; it is our collective duty to find a way of utilizing these human resources in the cause of Allah.

Allah teaches us in the Qur'an: *"And [as for] the believers, both men and women — they are close unto one another; they enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and are constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto Allah and His Apostle. It is they upon whom Allah will bestow His grace: verily Allah is almighty and wise!* [Surah At-Tawbah, 71]."

What Allah presents before us is a methodology for success both in this life and the hereafter. The basis of the approach is first the full acknowledgment of belief and its acceptance in all its manifestation, but beyond that it is working together towards the establishment of the faith, both on an individual and community level.

As Fathi Yakun states in his book To Be A Muslim, "A person who lives for Islam will work with other like-minded people. Believing in Islam means to work in solidarity with others in an activist movement, directed toward teaching the truths of Islam, establishing the Islamic personality and family, and establishing the Islamic community."

Thus as we enter into a new school year we must each bear this responsibility for Allah says, *"No bearer of burdens shall be made to bear the burden of another* [Al-An'am, 164]." If each Muslim on campus was at least to feel the need to be part of a larger Islamic community, we would be taking a great leap forward in our potential to change the wrongs around us, and come together to serve Allah in a practical way.

Nevertheless, community building is not easy, and it cannot happen in the short term. Communities and societies are built over many years; while others in our position in the past may not have had the resources we have, Alhamdulillah, Muslim students who have reached the level of awareness at which they are ready to begin this process have powerful tools to do this work.

Among the most effective tools at our disposal is planning. Planning is not something which requires any special certification, but simply a group of people who have made establishing a community a part of their lives. Planning requires organization, dedication and education — and this is where we as at the University of Toronto must begin.

Over the summer months, the new MSA executive sat together and set certain long-term goals for itself. Foremost, among these goals was the establishment of a community. Inshallah, this year we want to begin this process.

Among the short-term goals are to establish an MSA organization that is both functional and open to all Muslims. The MSA executive must try to establish Islam first and foremost in their own lives. Within our executive we must establish a sense of dedication and commitment that is more than just superficial lip-service. Being involved in Islamic work is not just any other kind of work — we must remember that in our small way we, Inshallah, are helping other Muslims and serving Allah. Finally, as an MSA leadership, our executive must also be involved in a continuous program of education. Islamic work cannot be truly effective until our lives are enriched by Islam, both in faith and practice.

The next step is to translate these specific personal/executive goals into our activities. Activity must not be baseless or without reason. Moreover, each activity must serve a distinct and important purpose. Activity simply for the sake of activity, is without purpose and is in fact destructive, because it creates in the participants a sense of something having been accomplished, when in reality nothing was done at all.

Over the next year there must be a continued stress on reaching out to more Muslims on campus and make them feel part of a wider social network. This will require us to be tolerant and open to our fellow brothers and sisters. The Prophet has said that even, "Your smile in the face of your brother is an act of charity." We must be willing to do this and much more.

Because the MSA and Muslim community of campus changes so much from year to year, it is difficult to keep a sense of continuity and purpose from year to year. Nevertheless, we must try to establish a methodology which could be used and adapted by those who come to the university in the future.

These short reflections are just the scattered beginnings of a life-long process, which needs individual commitment and communal work. Moreover, the MSA needs you and other Muslims to take an active role in shaping our collective destiny.

We pray as the Prophet prayed: "O Allah! I seek refuge from a knowledge which does not benefit, from a heart which is not humble, from an inner self which is never satisfies, and from a prayer which is not answered. O Allah! Forgive us, guide us, have mercy on us, grant us well-being and sustain us. Ameen."

Abdul-Rehman Malik is a well-known former Liberal-with-a-capital-L accomodationist sell-out. But he's now been brainwashed by the Fanatical Lovers.

How to Respond to a Wave of Information

By Danish Memon

As we are busy with our daily activities there are constant waves of information flowing towards our senses (hearing, sight, touch, smell) and our critical faculties are constantly at work trying to decipher, decode, interpret and respond to the onslaught.

For example, as we move our shopping cart through the grocery store we see fruits and vegetables, people and other objects. We smell a multitude of aromas. We can feel our cart and the ground beneath our feet, and taste samples of food or a piece of chewing gum in our mouth.

In addition to our typical daily experience there is a constant wave of detrimental information aimed at us. So how do we deal with the negative data, especially as people trying to please Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala?

We know how we should respond to situations which involve alcohol (including advertisements), interest (money), drugs, immodesty in dress and behavior (live or otherwise). The moral code of behavior is outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and explained on several occasions, in literature as well as in lectures. However, often we are not able to respond to the above-mentioned situations as we are directed by Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala to do.

If we look at response to stimuli from an analytical perspective, we can conclude that we need our senses. There are more than only five basic senses. All our senses are tools from Allah. They are the antennae by which we "pick-up" or gather information. However, in addition to these receptors we have decoders. The decoders help us to give intelligent meaning to the information that our senses have intercepted. Once the information is decoded, it goes through a critical process phase. Finally once we have analyzed the information, we act upon it.

By the grace of Allah, there is a process by which we develop our analyzing ability. Throughout childhood we learn; how to make sounds, mimic sounds, feel, associate sounds with meaning (language). We are also taught about permissible and not permissible, good vs. bad, right vs. wrong and more. As we grow up we are constantly making associations between what we see and the value or quality it has. If we are brought up to associate stealing with bad, we will cringe every time we hear about theft.

In other words, we give value due learning. Even if we are not sure about a particular thing we may adopt the closest experience that we have had in the past. Nowadays we find that it is difficult to avoid questionable things because we can't respond to them. Although we may have been told that something is bad, we find ourselves being involved in it or at least not condemning it. Since many of us have gone through our childhood and youth conditioning, we are lacking the proper knowledge to combat all that we face in society. Is it too late to reach an old dog new tricks? Don't be fooled! It is never too late for Allah to rescue us, if we want to be rescued.

However, in order to be rescued, we need a new conditioning. It is a conditioning from Allah. The key to learning about righteousness is *Taqwa*, which is a word with a very deep meaning. A few English words to explain it might include: consciousness, awe, and adoration. Basically Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala has so many qualities and is so awesome, that if we understood a glimpse of any or all of them we would be filled with *Taqwa*. Allah says in his revelation to humankind, al-Qur'an, in 2:21:

O ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord who created you, and those who came before you that you may have a chance to learn righteousness.

The word adore is a translation of *Taqwa*. How do we obtain *Taqwa*? Those who have an ion of *Taqwa* are those who tend towards truth and goodness. In other words they want to be able to distinguish between right and wrong. They see that there is a difference and want to keep away from evil and tend toward good. Note that in the above-stated verse, Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala is addressing all the people.

We have the basic tools: sensors and decoders. Now we need to improve our critical faculties, we need to widen our library of knowledge in order that we may know how to react firmly in various situations. Although our library of good vs. evil and our reaction drivers may need building, let us turn away from evil and towards all goodness, i.e. Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala. In that way we may have a chance to learn righteousness, Insha-Allah.

I beg Allah for his forgiveness for the errors in this article and in myself, as well as your errors. May Allah bring us closer to him, if we really want guidance, and may Allah admit us into His Paradise. Be patient, no matter how much faith you have, Allah is always willing to guide those who want to be guided. And Allah knows exactly what is the intention in our hearts.

Daanish Memon is a recent graduate from the Faculty of Engineering (Civil) at the University of Toronto.

Research at the University of Toronto:

Graduate Student Profiles

Introduction

Many students are unaware of the number of Muslims that are in graduate studies. There is a lot of wistful reminiscing about the glory of the Golden Age of Islam gone past, where Muslims led the world in the seeking of new knowledge and discoveries. Yet many people do not realize that Muslims are in the forefront of much of the research that goes on today.

A lot of the brothers and sisters that you see for Salat are often working in the most ground-breaking fields of research in their respective areas of intetest. From Compurer Science and Engineering to Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies to Political Science and Neurology, Muslims are well-represented in almost all faculties and areas of study.

It is our intention to bring to you, from rime to time, profiles of some of these researchers. Our inrention is nor just to highlight the work that these brothers and sisters are doing, but to pethaps inspire some of the younger students into believing that they can build their deen and excel in the field of academic research as well.

Electromagnetic waves

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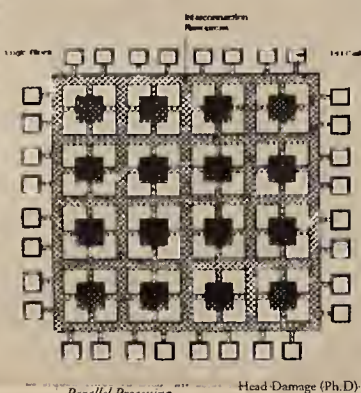
Electromagnetic characterization of high speed VLSI interconnects:

Recent development of VLSI circuits aims to integrate a large number of active devices on a single chip. The target is always ro improve the packaging density of rhe active devices and their inrrinsic gate delays for the sake of better and faster performance . However, rhe limiting factor is always the on-chip interconnects which play an important role in determining the speed and power consumption of rhese VLSI circuits. Hence, rhe analysis of rhe on-chip interconnects is the key to harnessing the full porential of VLSI and future ULSI circuits.

The existing CAD tools for the EM characterizarion of these interconnects are only reliable in the low frequency ranges as they use Quasi-static approximation. So, Full-wave analysis techniques must be used for an accutate EM characrerization, especially in the high frequency ranges. However, the existing Full-wave analysis techniques are computationally inefficient in terms of the memory storage and the computation time, so rhere is a rremendous need for developing new Full-wave rechniques that are compurationally efficienr and can be used in CAD programs.



Parallel Processing

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Modern supercompurers are mulriprocessor systems. As opposed to a personal computer and a workstation, where a single microprocessor is used, multiple microprocessors are used in a multiprocessor machine. These microprocessors are interconnected rhrough a communication network, and cooperate with each other in processing a single application. An applicarion is thus divided into small pieces and run separately, at the same rime, on multiple processors. Parallel Processing is a discipline encompassing architecture, operating systems, compilers, progtamming languages, algorithm design, software tools for mulriprocessor system. My research is focused on the design of interconnection networks.

FPGA / CAD

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Architecture and CAD of Field Programmable Gate Arrays and Field Progtammable Systems, Rapid Prototyping, Hardware Desctiprion Languages, VLSI design and CAD, Computer Organization, Micro-processor Systems.

Muhammad Khellah
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My interests center around the area of Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs). FPGAs are user-programmable chips that have gained wide acceptance as an attractive technology for implementation of digital circuits. The user-programmable FPGAs offer unique advantages such as instant manufacturing turn-around, fast prototyping and low design costs. Howevet, user-programmability of FPGAs also incurs the inherent drawbacks of reduced logic density and low speed-performance, and this engenders limitations on the range of applicarions for which FPGAs are suitable. My work involves different approaches to improve both FPGA's architecture and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) tools.

Architectural and Compiler Support for DSP Applications

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Digital Signal Processors (DSPs) are special-purpose microprocessors thar employ architectural features (arithmetic and logical units, temporary storage registers, and memory banks) organized to support rhe efficient execurion of digital signal processing algorirhms. These algorithms are extensively used in the areas of telecommunications, speech and audio processing, image processing and digital conrrol.

DSPs are mostly programmed in assembly languages (low-level machine instructions) to generate the most efficient code possible, and to fully utilize the DSPs' underlying architectural features. However, the difficulty in programming, debugging, and maintaining sophisticated assembly language applications makes high-level languages (HLLs) and their corresponding compilers a better alternative for programming DSPs. Contemporaty compilers, however, are unable to make full use of the peculiar architectural features of DSPs, and the quality of compiler-generated code remains poor compared to hand-coded assembly.

Our research involves studying ways of making DSPs more flexible target architectures for HLL compilers without compromising rheir performance. We are also designing new compiler algorithms thar can better exploit the underlying archirectural features of DSPs and that can further enhance the execution performance of DSP applications.

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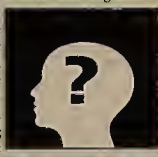
Faith in Action (Part 2): Jihad and the Condition of Muslims

By Jamal Zarabozo

Allah in Qur'an shows us the description of the true hypocrites, those who are really lacking in Imaan, those who are destined to the lowest depths of HellFire. Allah has described some of the characteristics with respect to Jihad. When we see these in Qur'an, where Allah says what hypocrites do, what Kuffar do, what Shaitan does, we should do our best that we do not have those charactertstics. In Surah *Taubah*, Allah says that hypocrites are very happy when they are left behind and Jihad is going on. They are very happy that they did not have to sacrifice. They rejoice at sitting behind and hate to give up anything of this dunya. The excuse they give here is that it is very hot and Allah says that the heat in Hell is much greater. Another aspect of Allah has described in Surah *Muhammad* is that the hypocrites claim to believe in Jihad and when the call for Jihad is made, they back off. The hypocrites tell Prophet (SAW) that they will do Jihad if only Allah revealed a Surah where Jihad is mentioned, and when Allah revealed giving permission to do Jihad, they give excuses not to do Jihad. This is a very serious characteristic and we have to make sure that we do not share this characteristic. Sometimes, we see this weakness in ourselves. We look for many excuses not sacrifice any part of this dunya. If the Khateeb says that we should give our wealth for Jihad in various parts of the world, the Shaitan or our Nafs will give us million excuses like, I need this money for something else or those people are not really making Jihad for the sake of Allah. We have to realize that we are just looking for excuses to not sacrifice our wealth. We have to realize that this is the charactetistic of hypocrites that Allah has described.

Another charectetistic of hypocrites regarding Jihad is that if they are forced to take part in Jihad, they will cause as much trouble to Muslims as possible. So we see that Jihad is not just a good deed to please Allah but the teal sacrifice and love for Jihad itself is an essential aspects of Imaan and it is one of the charectetisiics that distinguish a person having true Imaan and not having true Imaan. But especially, if we look at the situation of present ummah, I think the true beleivers ate the ones who are willing to sacrifice for Allah. Out obligations differ in different circumstances. In some cases, Jihad, ie. actually fighting, is fard kifayah, ie, it is obligatory on us as a community. In other cases, as true believers, there is no choice but to sacrifice our wealth and lives. If we do not participate, we should question out Imaan. Prophet (SAW) said that none of us is a true believer unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. When we see what is happening to our brothers in sisters in various parts of the world, we have to think about this Hadith. This also means that if we hate something for outselves, we should hate it for out brothers and sisters. We have to act so that our brothers and sisters have what we love and are safe from what we hate.

Also Prophet (SAW) said that if anyone sees any evil, be should change it with his hand if he could do so, otherwise he should change it with his tongue if he could do so, otherwise he should hate it in his heart and that is the weakest of Imaan. Removing the munkar not only



from ourselves but from our brothers and sisters is a part of Imaan. Allah says in Surah *Nis'a* and sometimes we should go to this passage in the Qur'an and look at our situation today and ask ourselves what Allah is telling us and how should we act. Allah is talking to Sahaba first and all the believers till the day of judgement. Allah is asking us that what is wrong with us that we do not go and fight in His way while there are those opressed asking Allah to take them out of that place and to give them a protector in their situation. Mufassireen in describing this dua to Allah by the oppressed people say that the protector and helper these people are asking should come from other believers. We are the ones who should go to their aid.

If we tead this verse in the light of millions of Muslims who are making this dua and realize that at how many places in various parts of the world is this dua being made, we should realize our responsibility. We are not in their situation and we have the ability to sacrifice our wealth and our lives and we are the ones Allah uses to answet their dua. But unfortunately, we can tead that ayah over and over and not realize what Allah is ordering us wheteas there are people making dua to Allah.

We can see from these verses of the Qur'an that if we want to be true believers and want to have hope of His Mercy and not have any characteristics of the munafiqeen, then we should look at ourselves. We have to be honest with outselves and Allah has knowledge of everything and we see that we don't have that willingness, then we should wake up and respond to the numetous verses of the Qur'an and realize that we have shortcomings in out Imaan and we are not the true believers that we aspire to be. Allah has shown us that even if Jihad is not fard a'in (individual obligation), Allah is pleased with those who go out for the sake of Allah and He has given them bounties and blessings much greatet than the believers who stayed behind. When Sahaba asked Prophet (SAW) about a deed which Allah loves, Allah revealed saying that Verily, Allah loves those who fight in His way in one rank as if they were a solid structure. Also the Prophet (SAW) explained to a man tegarding Jihad. The man asked Prophet (SAW) to show him a deed which is equal to Jihad. Prophet (SAW) said that there is no deed equal to Jihad. Prophet(SAW) said can you do Salaah without stopping while fasting without breaking the fast? The man said he cannot do it. Prophet (SAW) said even the footsteps the horse takes when it is tied and grazing go as reward to mujahid. On another occasion Prophet (SAW) said the best is the believet who strives in the way of Allah with his wealth and life.

In addition to enjoining Jihad, we see in Qur'an and Sunnah, what is the result of abandoning Jihad. What will come about to the Muslims when they do not take part in Jihad. One aspect we can see when Muslims as a whole abandon Jihad is the source of destruction in this world and in the Hereaftet. In this life, if we look at how things happen in this world, if someone has a belief like what Islam is and they do not propagate and defend and stand up for their beliefs, they will be subjugated and overtuled and despised by enemies. And with respect to the Hereafter, those who do not take part in Jihad and do not even consider taking part in Jihad, they die on a branch of hypocracy.

As Allah says in a verse that is greatly misquoted, misunderstood even by people who should know better, Allah (in Surah *Baqarah*) says spend and give in the way of Allah and do not destroy yourselves with your owa hands. This verse is not referring to suicide whatsoever. Those people who quote this verse as a proof against suicide are distorting the meaning of this verse according to the principles of tafseer. During the time of Abu Ayub Ansari, this verse was used by some people to mean putting yourselves in such a situation that is like suicide ie, a situation in which there is certain death. During Jibad, some people were facing enemy much larger than themselves and other people said that you are desttoying themselves and quoted this verse. The sahabi Abu Ayub Ansari said to them that they are quoting this verse wrongly and out of context. He said that "This verse was tevealed to us (Ansar) after we had participated in the battles of Prophet (SAW) and won Makkah. Then we said among ourselves that we left our dunya for Allah and now that we have conquered Makkah, we should go back to trade, farming etc. Then Allah revealed this verse." Mufassiteen say that desttoying yourselves means abandoning Jihad.

Also in a Hadith of Ptophet (SAW), he said that if you abandon the Jihad, spend your time with this Dunya and begin to deal with riba (interest), then Allah will humiliate you and you will not get rid of humiliation until you tepent to Allah and return to your original state. We see this situation among the present ummah. In another Hadith, Prophet (SAW) said that abandoning Jihad is a source of calamity and affliction. If the people become stingy with their dinars and dirhams and participate in riba and spend their time with Dunya and abandon Jihad then *fitna* will not leave them until they tetutn to their deen. Allah says that if we do not go out en mass to do Jihad, he will inflict a severe punishment and He will replace us with a different community. Here Allah is saying that we are not worthy of living in this world.

If we look at this world and try to understand the reality of Islam and the reality of Kufr, we will begin to understand why Allah obligated Jihad and why Jihad is such an imperative for the good of not only Muslims in this world but also the whole of mankind. When we talk of Jihad, we are not benefiting only outselves and not just Muslims but also non-Muslims by establishing Allah's Laws.

There are two groups of people. Those who follow Allah and those who follow Shaitan. There is no middle ground. If you are not a party of Allah, you are a party of Shaitan. And the enemity between these groups will exist because there can never be any compromise, love, cooperation between truth and falsehood, Islam and Kufr, *Haqq* and *Batil*. Shaitan and his party are an open enemy who will fight the believers till the day of judgement. Regarding Jews and Christians, Allah tells that they will never be happy and pleased with us until we follow their way of life.

If we see the nature of Islam, Haqq

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Disorientation: The Challenge of Freedom

By Naheed Mustafa

We've finally made it to university, we're adults, making our own decisions, on our own, and responsible to no one but ourselves. Freedom! And now the challenge begins.

Many of us come to university hoping to find our niche, hoping that this place will transform us from floundering adolescents into mature and sophisticated adults. We are wooed by the institution's air of intellectualism and feel ourselves being pulled slowly towards it. We are told to question ourselves and others ceaselessly and we get wrapped up in our pursuit of proving or disproving this or that myth.

We want to show that we are indeed as broadminded as we know ourselves to be. We sacrifice ideals we were passionate about and nurture those about which we feel, at best, ambivalent so we can prove that we too are flexible. But with our new-found freethinking ways, there is fear - fear that the guardians of intellectual debate may not think much of our self-proclaimed broadmindedness and slap a label on us: homophobic, sexist, racist, religionist, fanatic, terrorist.

It isn't long before our confidence in ourselves comes spiralling downwards: we lost who we were and don't recognize who we've become. And that is the time when we must decide how we are going to live. Inevitably, we must face the question - are we going to live a life of pleasing others and conforming to their notions of what is correct behaviour - notions that change with the direction of the wind? Or will we choose to live to please Allah who asks nothing more of us than to live a life that best suits our natures?

It is a question that all Muslims will face at some point in their lives. And if Allah shows us His mercy, we will face it while we are young.

University provides most people with unprecedented opportunities. The almost endless freedom on campus offers us chances to meet new people and explore our deen without having to concern ourselves with the oftentimes restrictive practices of our parent culture. It is an opportunity for real learning of Islam to take place, to apply to our faith the same principles of reasoning and understanding that we apply to our course work.

It is important not to let the feeling of unlimited freedom fool us into thinking that we are somehow not accountable for how we spend our time — accountable to ourselves and to Allah.

As Muslims, we will often find ourselves being subjected to excessive questioning on campus. We will be asked to explain the mindset of everyone from Yasser Arafat to Ayatollah Khomeini to Benazir Bhutto, as though Muslims are monolithic and always synonymous with Islam.

It is vital that we know who we are and know what Allah truly expects of us. It is not sufficient to go through life holding on to a handful of superstitions based on misinformation. Our strength comes from our knowledge and understanding of both deen and dune and how to reconcile the two. Once we have grasped that, with Allah's help we will be able to live a successful life both here and in the Akhira, hereafter.

Naheed Mustafa is a graduate of the University of Toronto from Arts and Sciences, and is now pursuing a career in journalism.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Islamic Scholarship Fund

For the 1994 season, the Muslims Students' Association at the University of Toronto, St.George Campus, in conjunction with the Pakistani Students' Association, has set up a scholarship fund for Muslim students.

This Scholarship is open to new and returning students to the University of Toronto (at any campus). Qualification for the Scholarship is based on financial need, academic achievement, community involvement, and personal character.

If you feel that you are qualified, or you have need of financial assistance, please contact one of the coordinators for an application form. The deadline for application for the scholarship is September 30th, 1994. Muslim brothers and sisters from all races and nationalities are encouraged to apply.

If you would like to contribute in some way to the I.S.F., financially or through some other means, or if you would like to donate a scholarship or become a cosponsor of the Scholarship, please contact one of the coordinators for more information.

Jazakumullah khair!

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The first of people against whom judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I fought for you until I died a martyr. He will say: You have lied — you did but fight that it might be said [of you]: He is courageous. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. [Another] will be a man who has studied [religious] knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the Quran. He will be brought and Allah will make known to his His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I studied [religious] knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Quran for Your sake. He will say: You have lied — you did but study [religious] knowledge that it might be said [of you]: He is learned. And you recited the Quran that it might be said [of you]: He is a reciter. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. [Another] will be a man whom Allah had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought and Allah will make known to his His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I left no path [untrodden] in which You like money to be spent without spending in it for Your sake. He will say: You have lied — you did but do so that it might be said [of you]: He is open-handed. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire.

Community Focus: The Islamic Foundation of Toronto

by Danish Memon

Over the next few months, The Muslim Voice will be asking members of the Metropolitan Toronto community to write about the various masajid and Islamic centres in the city, so that we can get to know our community better.

This month we begin with the Islamic Foundation in Scarborough. With its unmistakable look, it is one of the few domed mosques in North America. We ask Danish Memon, one of the mosque insiders, for a report on what's going on with the mosque.

Upon graduation from the University of Totonto in 1993, I became actively involved with the Islamic Foundation Community. Islamic Foundation of Totonto Inc. is the legal name of the 30 000 square foot mosque and Islamic centre which is located at 441 Nugget Avenue (one street north of Sheppard Avenue on Markham Road) in Scarbotough. Without a doubt, it has become a landmark in the city, being exposed to thousands of residents evety day.

The Nugget projecr started many years ago in 1983 when one of the founding members of drove past what was at that time an empty piece of land. With much determination the process of acquiting tbat plot of land began, with the intenrion of building a comprehensive institution for Islamic activity and learning. Convincing the municipal government and the former landowner was relatively simple when compared to the struggle which ensued with our restaurant neighbout to the north. Albamdulillah, the court case was finally settles and the Islamic Foundation of Totonto has been growing ever since.

Today, 4 years after the opening, we can see how the past struggles have not been in vain. At this point in time the Islamic Foundation, or simply the Foundation, offers a wide tange of social services, hosts youth programs, seminars and regular study circles, all by the grace of Allah. Furthermote, it is important to mention all the friendships that have evolved through the interaction which takes place at the Foundation; intetaction and brotherhood which is facilitated by the ongoing educational, sports and camping programs thar have become a tegular part of the activities.

Another important motif of the Foundation has been the development of the full-time Islamic school project that has taken shape ovet the last few years. The Foundation's mission has always been to work towards establishing a community that will continue into the future; Alhamdulillah, the school, which now employs several teachers servicing most of the primary grades is facilitating education and Islam within the mosque in a tangible way. The school has tried to put together a curriculum that provides the basis for further learning within the public education system, while stressing to students the need to approach learning and life with a definitive Islamic mentality. As the needs of the community grow, the school project will also continue to require the help of the community-at-large along with the dozens of Muslims who ate already working on the project full-time.

It is Allah's mercy which has kept the Islamic Foundation a working entity. Even with their fair share of "internal disagreements", the sisters and brothers who are inspired by Allah to keep the Foundation alive, continue to be creative and contribute by various means towards the well-being of the community.

We have much work to do. Some would call for the community to "mature", however, in my opinion, what is needed is a teal understanding of ourselves and our purpose on this earth. Narutally, such a discussion will eventually lead us to the conclusion thar following the path of Allah is the only way to achieve the kind of success we envision for the Foundation. The ingredients for the kind of community we want for the Foundation and every othet mosque, Inshallah, are there in the message of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Putting it into practice requires individual and collective effort with guidance from Allah. That guidance will only be received if we are willing to strive to learn it as well as follow it. May Allah make it easy for us.

If the future comes into being, I see the Islamic Foundarion of Toronto as a

(Continued on page 8)

All thats fit to print...

New Books Reviewed

by Nouman Ashraf

A Young Muslims Guide to the Modern World by Seyyed Hossein Nasr
Library of Islam. Des Plaines, Illinois. 1993. pp. 270.

In his most recent address to Muslim youth, Seyyed Hossein Nasr deal with and offers valuable insight on issues that are among the most important ones on the minds of Muslims everywhete. In this book he attempts to critique western society in a fair mannet, using Islamic measutes; and for the most patt he succeeds.

Having been educated both in traditional Islamic manner in his native Iran as well as in the "western" institutes of education at Harvard and MIT, he draws upon his unique educational background to enable himself to present the western liberal tradition from an insider's perspective.

He starts off with an excellent section on the importance of towhead and how it is central to the Muslim view of life and uses rhat as a recurring theme throughout the book to reiterate the very universal basis of Islam. It is a credit to Nast that he has dealt with some very profound concepts such as spirituality and its relevance in life, eschatology, tevelation and its function, etc., in such a natural mannet so as to make the entire matter much more intelligible for the teader. although bogged down by the odd anomaly, his arguments ate thotough and make intuitive sense to even the very unfamiliar Muslim teadet.

The second parr deals with the foundarions of western rhought ptesent a somewhat sketch caricature of the ideas and influences of the framers of western thought over the past several centuries. This section not only ptovides names and dares, but is also exttemely analytical. He makes valid criticisms of what we today know to be western thought, but he manages to avoid the all too familiar Muslim practice of discrediting anything western by default. That is not to say, however, that his analysis is perfect. Far from it, he perhaps goes too far in justifying the western perception of Islam. The teason that this does not sit well with me is that quite often we as Muslims spend too many of our tesources emphasizing what is not Islam and perhaps not do enough to actively show what Islam has to offer to us all at large.

Overall, the book is rich in valuable insight and takes a much needed practical approach to an often ignored need fot such discourse and discussion for the benefit of Muslim youth.

Nouman Ashraf is an ex-student the way many criminals are ex-cons: a repeat offender

Door and blind arches in the western facade of the mosque at Cordova, showing tile and bas-relief decoration characteristic of the art of the [Umayyed] Caliphate.

From:
A History of Islamic Spain
W.M. Watt & P. Cachia, 1992

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Faith In Action (part 2): Jihad and the Condition of Muslims

(Continued from page 5)

and *Batil* can never co-exist since Islam is not a religion in the western sense, ie, personal relationship between yourselves and God. Islam is a complete way of life and it is way Allah wants us to live and exist in this world. This applies not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. The people who are following *Batil*, they

> ...is...[the one who dies by drowning, burning, stomach-ache, or plague] *shaheed* in the same sense as the one who dies while doing Jihad...

do not like to see anyone standing for the truth. For example, they wanted to drive Prophet Lut away because he was pure. Even in this country, where they emphasize free speech, this applies only to *Batil*. These people do not want to hear about the truth. It is free speech for *Batil* but not for truth. As we see, Kuffar do not want to hear Haqq and do not want to see it practiced.

From the things we have discussed today, we see that Jihad is something which goes hand in hand with Imaan and all of us should be ready to sacrifice in the way of Allah. In this way we will be having correct Imaan, following Allah and avoiding nifaaq.

Question from the audience: I have asked this question before and haven't got a proper answer. It concerns going for Jihad and the danger of "death" (not injury). My point being that what is going to happen will happen and the causes and effects are decided by Allah. If we are sitting at home eating chips and watching TV, are we in greater danger of death in the battlefield or at home?

Answer by Shaykh Jamal: Allah says in Surah *Tauba* that even if you are in your bed, death will come to you. So, if you are eating chips you may choke on a chip but even if you are in your beds, death can come. So you may as well make your death in a good way.

Questioner: My question is there a *greater* danger of death in the battlefield than what we consider as safe environment? There may be greater danger of injury but as far as death is concerned, are we closer to death?

Answer: All the things about qadr (destiny) we do not understand completely. For example if you are going to the land which has an infectious disease there is a greater chance that you may get that disease but you will get that disease only if it is there in your qadr. If your staying away from that land, the causes are not present and it also qadr that the disease is being kept away from you. So, your question is not that important when you realize that you are going to die and you try to make your death also an act of worship to Allah. Even if you do not achieve that goal, as long as you have the intention and you die in your bed, you will get the reward. This happened to many Sahaba who went to many battlefields and had the intention to die in the way of Allah but they died in their beds.

Question. There is a Hadith which says that anyone who dies by drowning, burning, stomach-ache, plague dies as a shaheed (marryt). My question is that if that person is shaheed in the same sense as the one who dies while doing Jihad and secondly will he be granted the intercession for 70 persons?

Answer: There are 3 types of shuhada. One kind is the shaheed of this world and Hereafter, second is the shaheed of Hereafter only and the third is the shaheed of this world only. For example, who dies in the battlefield, we call him shaheed and he is treated separately like janaza (burial) etc. We have no idea about his intention. If he was munafiq, Allah knows. We treated him like shaheed. But Allah will punish him. This person is a shaheed of this world only. If they are true believers and sincere, they are shuhada of this world and Hereafter. The people who die of drowning etc, we treat them normally and they are shuhada of Hereafter only. Some scholars say it is so because of the painful death. Allahu Alam.

Jamaluddin Zarabozo is an `alim based in Denver, Colorado. This article was obtained from the InterNet.

A Community Focus: The Future of the Islamic Foundation

(Continued from page 7)

place where a whole community will develop and grow. The full-time school, youth programs and Da'wah are only a few of the milestones on this journey.

It is the participation of the people towards well-defined objectives and capable leaders who are able to synthesise the resources (which Allah has provided) that will be the cause of success. The building of the Foundation structure is almost complete, however what we need now are hard workers inspired by Allah to move our Muslim community forward step-by-step. However, this work has to be done in every Muslim organisation, and for that we need collective efforts.

Allah is the one we should look to for help and guidance. Lift your hands and beg Allah to inspire us to do whatever is required no matter how difficult it is. Ameen.

The Islamic Foundation is part of my "hometown" and although I love every mosque because it is a place of prayer — the Foundation will always have a special place in my heart.

Brothers and sisters, get active in your local mosque. One day you and I might have the opportunity to work together. In closing I seek Allah's forgiveness and yours for any of my weaknesses or inaccuracies.

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Muslim Students' Association

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